

Department of Consumer Protection

At a Glance

Edwin R. Rodriguez, Commissioner

Ronald F. Angelo, Deputy Commissioner

Established - 1959

Statutory authority - CGS Chap. 416, Section 21a-1

**Central office - 165 Capitol Avenue,
Hartford, CT 06106**

Average number of employees - 169 (All Funds)

Recurring operating expenses - \$15,000,589

General Fund Revenue	\$ 26,277,917
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Transportation Fund Receipts	\$ 635,704
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Total Revenue in Fiscal 2004:	\$ 26,913,621
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Organizational structure -

Business Office: Provides financial and administrative support services such as budgeting, accounting, accounts payable/receivable, payroll and procurement.

Consumer Education: Proactively provides consumers with information helping them protect themselves and provides educational programs on issues such as prevention of underage drinking and playground safety.

Communications: Informs and alerts the public to marketplace fraud, food and product recalls and the Agency's legal actions by providing information to the media and on the agency website. Also provides support to the Commissioner for research on emerging issues or problems.

Drug Control: Enforces laws concerning the manufacture, sale and distribution of all controlled substances and the adulteration and/or misbranding of all drugs, cosmetics and medical devices.

Food & Standards: Oversees food safety and labeling and ensures accuracy of all weights and measures of food, fuels and other consumer commodities by regular inspections as well as inspections of accidents and other emergency sites. Operates the Measurement Laboratory, the only metrology certification laboratory in the state.

Human Resources: Administers all personnel, labor relations and affirmative action activities.

Technical Systems Unit: Provides information technology support to the agency. The IT system also allows consumers to obtain information on Connecticut laws, verify licenses, download complaint forms and rosters and utilize many other services.

Legal Staff: Handles the Agency's legal and enforcement activities, drafts legislative proposals and regulations, issues civil investigative demands and subpoenas, and conducts compliance meetings and formal administrative hearings.

License Services: Processes 192,000 licenses, registrations and permits in 203 categories.

Liquor Control: Enforces laws concerning sale of alcoholic liquor in Connecticut. Conducts inspections of licensed liquor establishments, investigates new liquor applicants for suitability, conducts investigations into complaints of violations of state liquor regulations and laws, works in a collaborative manner with local, state and federal law enforcement officers, provides training on state liquor laws and regulations.

Public Charities Unit: Registers professional fund-raisers and profiles charitable organizations to protect the public from charity fraud.

Trade Practices: Investigates violations of law involving Connecticut's Unfair Trade Practices Act, Itinerant Vendors, Health Clubs, Closing Out Sales, Product Safety, Home Improvement and New Home Construction. Also, enforces the provisions of the New Car Warranty Act, known as "Lemon Law." Provides a consumer complaint center that responds to written complaints and manages a consumer "hotline."

Occupational and Professional Licensing: Oversees occupational, professional, athletic, real estate and appraisal applications for licensure, investigates violations and consumer complaints and assists sixteen State Licensing Boards and Commissions.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Consumer Protection is to ensure a fair and equitable marketplace, safe products and services for consumers in the industries that we license, regulate and enforce.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The Department of Consumer Protection is firmly committed to the principles and objectives of equal employment opportunity for all individuals. The Department's full-time Affirmative Action Officer coordinates and monitors the agency's programs and ensures compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Fair Employment Practices Act, state Affirmative Action regulations and Contract Compliance laws.

In FY 2003-2004, 49 percent of the Agency's employees were female and 51 percent were male, with the following composition: 73 percent white, 15 percent black, 9 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Asian and 1 percent Indian. The Department's Affirmative Action plan has been approved by the CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

Public Service

- The agency provided training to more than three hundred law enforcement officers on state liquor laws and regulations, and in conjunction with local and state police officers, conducted more than 260 alcohol compliance checks statewide, targeting sales to minors.
- The agency provided training to hundreds of law enforcement officers regarding the identification of narcotic drugs and signs and symptoms of drug abusers. In addition, the Division presented numerous talks to over 1,000 pharmacists throughout the state with special emphasis on new drug laws and the prevention of prescription errors.
- In its second year of operation, the Department's e-commerce website renewed more than 9,600 licenses and credentials online, up 13 percent from the prior year. Total fees collected from online renewals were \$1,282, 482.
- In April, the agency concluded a major, three-month sting operation in Enfield that netted 143 home improvement contractors found in violation of the law.
- Through mediation and direct orders by the Department, millions of dollars were returned to consumers as a result of such programs as the Home Improvement Guaranty Fund 2003 (\$2,506,078) and the Health Club Guaranty Fund.
- The Department recovered or returned hundreds of thousands of dollars in compensation to Connecticut consumers through administrative orders or litigation brought under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act.
- The Lemon Law Program returned over 3.2 million dollars to consumers through manufacturer's compliance of arbitration awards.
- The Department responded to thousands of consumer calls and nearly 8,000 written consumer complaints.
- In support of Public Act 00-118, "An Act Concerning Telephone Solicitation," DCP registered and transmitted to the Federal Trade Commission's Do Not Call Registry the registration data on over one million Connecticut consumers.

Improvements/Achievements 2003-04

- The Department continued to upgrade its computer network and e-licensing and complaint handling software system by converting from token ring to Ethernet, and from an Oracle-based database to a SQL environment.
- The agency launched a major initiative to upgrade its public website and migrate it to the Connecticut government portal.